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PROVISIONAL VERBATIM RECORD OF THE TWO THOUSAND NINE HUNDRED AND SEVENTY-SEVENTH MEETING (PART II) (closed-resumption 1)

Held at Headquarters, New York,
on Friday, 15 February 1991, at 3.30 p.m.

President:	Mr. MUMBENGEGWI	(Zimbabwe)
Members:	Austria	Mr. HOHENFELLNER
	Belgium	Mr. NOTERDAEME
	China	Mr. LI Daoyu
	Côte d'Ivoire	Mr. ANET
	Cuba	Mr. ALARCON de QUESADA
	Ecuador	Mr. AYALA LASSO
	France	Mr. BLANC
	India	Mr. GHAREKHAN
	Romania	Mr. MUNTEANU
	Union of Soviet Socialist Republics	Mr. VORONTSOV
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Sir David HANNAY
	United States of America	Mr. PICKERING
	Yemen	Mr. AL-ASHTAL
	Zaire	Mr. BAGBENI ADEITO NZENGEYA

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The meeting was resumed at 4.10 p.m. on Friday, 15 February 1991.

The PRESIDENT: Before calling on the next speaker, I should like to draw the attention of members of the Council to documents S/22224, letter dated 14 February 1991 from the Permanent Representative of Iraq to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General, and S/22225, letter dated 13 February 1991 from the Permanent Representative of Tunisia to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council.

Mr. GHAREKHAN (India): The Security Council's meeting today comes in the wake of a development that deserves the Council's immediate and careful consideration. I am referring to this morning's communiqué issued by the Revolutionary Command Council of Iraq regarding Security Council resolution 660 (1990) with the aim of reaching an honourable and acceptable political solution, including withdrawal - and I emphasize withdrawal.

Let me stress two cardinal points. Firstly, the origins of the crisis are unmistakable and undeniable, as is the need to reverse the unprovoked aggression and illegal annexation of Kuwait by Iraq. Resolution 660 (1990) addresses precisely this. Secondly, and equally important, the crisis in the Gulf had earlier devastated Kuwait and is now taking a tragic toll in human lives in both Kuwait and Iraq. We have been deeply pained by the hardship suffered by the people of Kuwait for the past several months and, while their sufferings continue and have in fact sharply increased, innocent civilians in Iraq are also undergoing enormous hardship and losses. This devastation must be brought to an end - and the sooner, the better.

The Security Council, mandated to remain seized of the matter, thus has a solemn responsibility on both the counts I have just outlined: implementation of resolution 660 (1990) and restoration of peace in the region.

(Mr. Gharekhan, India)

My delegation believes that we must not close what appears to be a window of opportunity opening out. Diplomacy must be given a chance at this juncture; indeed, it has a duty to exert itself in such circumstances. Too much is at stake in terms of human lives, the safeguarding of international law, the foundations of peaceful ties among sovereign States and the promotion of tranquil and mutually beneficial relations amongst the countries in the Gulf for us to let slip from our grasp any opportunity for peace, no matter how small it might seem at this time.

With all this in mind, my delegation would like to offer some ideas on the way in which the United Nations can continue to address this issue.

Firstly, the Security Council, in taking note of the reported offer from Iraq, should consider ways and means to utilize it towards the full implementation of resolution 660 (1990). In doing so, the Council should engage in discussions on the possibilities available to it to promote a peaceful resolution of the crisis. This, I believe, will strengthen the Council's prestige, credibility and functioning.

(Mr. Gharekhan, India)

Secondly, to underpin our efforts at achieving a peaceful resolution, there should be an immediate cessation, or at the least a suspension, of hostilities in the Gulf. My delegation believes that such a step will provide the necessary environment for the purpose as well as for the commencement of a time-bound process of complete and speedy withdrawal of Iraqi forces from Kuwait.

Thirdly, the role of the Secretary-General in his endeavours to seek peace deserve not only consistent and full support but reinforcement. We would therefore, in the present context, like the Security Council to request the Secretary-General urgently to examine what needs to be done to ensure that a peaceful resolution of the Gulf crisis can be achieved. My delegation would like the Secretary-General to redouble his efforts in this direction. There are other efforts pursued by several countries which can go on in parallel. In particular, I refer to the efforts of the Non-Aligned Movement, which in the very near future will be sending a mission of ministers to Baghdad. I refer also to the efforts of the Soviet Government and of its envoy to Baghdad, and to the forthcoming visit of the Foreign Minister of Iraq to Moscow.

In putting forth those ideas, my delegation's purpose is twofold, as I explained earlier: to ensure implementation of resolution 660 (1990) and to save the Gulf region from further bloodshed and destruction.

India's relations with Iraq and Kuwait go long back into history. Our peoples and Governments have worked together to noteworthy mutual benefit. This legacy of good will animates our wish to see peace returned to the region. We should like to see more secure and durable foundations for peace, stability and cooperation in that vital part of the world, and we believe that the Security Council at this juncture has an inalienable and urgent role to play in promoting this.

Mr. BLANC (France) (interpretation from French): From the very beginning of the crisis launched by Iraq's invasion of Kuwait on 2 August last, France constantly sought - indeed until the very last moment - to promote a peaceful solution.

In that spirit, the President of the French Republic proposed on 24 September last to the General Assembly an approach that postulated as a prerequisite Iraq's adherence to the views of the Security Council. I should like to recall here the fundamental elements of that approach: first of all, affirmation of Iraq's intention to withdraw its troops from Kuwait; then, the international community's guarantee of the withdrawal of military forces as well as the restoration of Kuwait's sovereignty; the substitution, at a later stage, of the dynamics of good-neighbourliness in security and peace for the various elements of confrontation in the Middle East, whether it be the situation in Lebanon or the Arab-Israeli conflict, through an initiative which would avoid an overlapping of conflicts that are different in nature and which would imply direct dialogue between the parties concerned, agreement among neighbouring or adjacent States and international backing - with the idea, at the end of that road, of an international conference; and, finally, a mutually agreed reduction of armaments in the region and the beginning of cooperation from the Middle East to the Atlantic, opening the way to stability and prosperity.

On the basis of those proposals, we unceasingly pursued our attempts to make Iraq abide by our Council's resolutions.

Even quite recently - shortly before the end of the pause of good will decided upon by the Council in its resolution 678 (1990), France undertook an initiative by which the United Nations would address a final appeal to the Iraqi leaders. We hoped that they would immediately declare their intention to withdraw from Kuwait in accordance with a programmed timetable and would immediately begin a massive and

(Mr. Blanc, France)

speedy withdrawal, on the understanding that the withdrawal would be carried out under United Nations control, with the participation of peace-keeping forces for which Arab countries in particular would be called upon, that a guarantee of non-aggression could be given to Iraq, that negotiations would begin with a view to the achievement of a peaceful settlement, and that once this settlement had been achieved, with respect for the Security Council resolutions, the members of the Council would make an active contribution to the settlement of other problems of the region, in particular the Arab-Israeli conflict and the Palestine problem.

All those proposals presented by France in order to achieve a peaceful solution to the crisis are still valid.

The Iraqi Revolutionary Command Council issued this morning a long declaration, which doubtless contains a new element, distinct from previous categorical declarations. This time the Iraqi authorities envisage withdrawal from Kuwait - but they add on impossible conditions that do not fall under Security Council resolution 660 (1990), which, I recall, provides for immediate and unconditional withdrawal from Kuwait. At the point where we find ourselves, the Iraqi proposal, which does not meet that demand and multiplies conditions, cannot be accepted.

Therefore, we consider that a Security Council initiative aimed at the suspension of hostilities would be pointless. In the present circumstances, it would not hold out any political prospects.

We understand the deep emotion aroused in Arab and Islamic public opinion by the military operation, which affects an Arab and Islamic country and people, as well as the solidarity felt by other countries within the non-aligned group. But it would run counter to the facts to present the action now under way as action pitting the West against the Arab world or the North against the South. This

(Mr. Blanc, France)

action is the result of resolutions adopted on behalf of the entire international community by the Security Council, and it will be for the Council, moreover, to organize in due time a return to peace, and to play its full role in helping to lay down the conditions for lasting peace and security in the region. It brings together, alongside Western countries, Arab and Islamic countries. Its objective is to make Iraq - which bears the responsibility for a particularly serious violation of international law through its occupation and subsequent annexation of another State, an Arab State, a sovereign State - restore and respect international law.

Still today, we are aware that only Iraq possesses the means to put an end to the present situation by agreeing to abide fully by the Security Council resolutions. We voice the hope that it will do so. Its existence as a sovereign State which, because of its position, its resources and the capabilities of its people, has an important role to play in the region's balance and development is not in question.

Mr. ALARCON DE QUESADA (Cuba) (interpretation from Spanish): The representative of India has clearly described the specific circumstances in which we are continuing this closed meeting, which the Council began yesterday. I would fully associate my delegation with the comments he has made.

On this occasion my delegation wishes to put before the Council three draft resolutions we have just submitted to the Secretariat for official distribution. They refer to action we believe the Council should envisage as a matter of urgency. They are short, and accordingly I can read them out.

The first reads as follows:

"The Security Council,

"Deeply concerned by the state of war existing in the Gulf and, above all, by the losses of human life and the destruction of material property caused by the mass bombings suffered by the cities of Iraq,

"Committed to restoring the independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity of Kuwait,

"Considering its primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security, as established in Article 24 of the Charter of the United Nations,

"Convinced that it is its duty to use all peaceful means for the settlement of international conflicts and differences in order to maintain international peace and security and 'save succeeding generations from the scourge of war', as proclaimed in the Preamble to the Charter of the United Nations,

"1. Demands that the bombings of the cities of Iraq be immediately halted and requests that the negotiations for seeking a peaceful resolution of the conflict be immediately intensified without further resort to force;

"2. Decides to remain seized of the matter." (S/22232)

(Mr. Alarcon de Quesada, Cuba)

Another draft resolution reads as follows:

"The Security Council,

"Reaffirming the need to take steps with a view to reaching a peaceful solution to the present situation in the Gulf,

"Committed to restoring the independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity of Kuwait, and avoiding further losses of life and material property,

"Considering the role which the Secretary-General has played in the elimination and avoidance of situations of conflict and the role he has to play in achieving a peaceful solution to the situation of war prevailing in the Gulf,

"Considering also the efforts which the Secretary-General made to that end before hostilities erupted on 16 January 1991,

"1. Requests the Secretary-General to renew his good offices and mediation efforts without delay, on the basis of his statement to the press of 15 January 1991, and to report back to the Council as soon as possible;

"2. Decides to remain seized of the matter." (S/22233)

Another draft resolution would read as follows:

"The Security Council,

"Recalling its resolutions 660 (1990), 661 (1990), 662 (1990), 664 (1990), 665 (1990), 666 (1990), 667 (1990), 669 (1990), 670 (1990), 674 (1990), 677 (1990) and 678 (1990),

"Guided by the purposes and principles of the United Nations, as set out in Chapter I of the Charter of the United Nations,

"Mindful of the provisions of Article 29 of the Charter of the United Nations, which provides that 'the Security Council may establish such subsidiary organs as it deems necessary for the performance of its functions',

(Mr. Alarcon de Quesada, Cuba)

"Acting in accordance with rule 28 of the provisional rules of procedure of the Security Council, which states that 'the Security Council may appoint a commission or committee or a rapporteur for a specified question',

"Deeply concerned by the war situation existing in the Gulf region, which endangers international peace and security, and determined to put an end to the hostilities as soon as possible,

"1. Decides to establish an Ad Hoc Committee, composed of all members of the Security Council, to examine the situation currently prevailing in the Gulf region and consider possible formulas for halting armed actions and achieving a peaceful settlement of the conflict on the basis of the above-mentioned resolutions of the Security Council, thus avoiding further loss of life and destruction;

"2. Decides also that the Ad Hoc Committee referred to in paragraph 1 shall begin its work immediately after the adoption of the present resolution;

"3. Decides further that the Ad Hoc Committee shall report back to the Security Council on its findings and on any specific proposals which may have been made not later than 28 February 1991." (S/22231)

I should like to add that in submitting these draft resolutions my delegation wishes to associate itself with the sentiments of profound alarm and concern that have been aroused throughout the world by the recent manifestations of the development of the war. It wishes to say it is convinced that so long as the conflict cannot be resolved or redirected through negotiation and dialogue we should at least try to avoid further vast damage being inflicted on the civilian population by the conflict.

(Mr. Alarcon de Quesada, Cuba)

We must to the fullest extent possible spare from injury and suffering civilians in Iraq and Kuwait, as well as in Israel, Saudi Arabia and all other nations affected by the conflict. We also believe that, as was mentioned by our colleague from India, the Security Council must now fully assume its responsibilities and try to create a framework in which the different steps being taken - such as the outstanding effort of President Gorbachev or the démarches of the non-aligned countries noted earlier by Ambassador Gharekhan - might enjoy the greatest possible success.

But in addition, the Council itself should consider, evaluate and study any initiative or idea presented by Members of the United Nations in order to help find a solution to this conflict as soon as possible and to try to give dialogue, diplomatic initiative and negotiation a genuine opportunity. We must give peace a chance if we are to save not only the civilian lives that today are threatened by war, but also those of soldiers on either side. I believe that it is the ethical obligation of us all to try to deal with the fate and safety of innocent civilians, first and foremost, but also of the young soldiers - be they from Iraq, the United States, or any other country involved in the conflict - whose lives are threatened by the continuation of the war.

My delegation is, of course, ready and willing to continue the consultations we have begun with some of our colleagues and to consider with all members the draft resolutions we have submitted, which we hope the Council will be able to adopt with all the urgency demanded by the situation.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the representative of Cuba for his kind words addressed to me.

The next speaker is the representative of Japan. I invite him to take a place at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. HATANO (Japan): I wish to congratulate you, Sir, on your assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for the month of February. You have already demonstrated your able stewardship of the Council and we are fortunate to have you as President. I should also like to extend my delegation's appreciation to your predecessor, Ambassador Nzengeya of Zaire, for the outstanding manner in which he managed the work of the Council during the month of January.

The Government of Japan has read Iraq's announcement this morning, which includes a new element of its willingness to withdraw from Kuwait. Unfortunately, certain conditions are attached to its acceptance of the relevant Security Council resolutions. My Government, however, is carefully studying this announcement to determine what Iraq's true intentions are.

Ever since Iraq's armed invasion of Kuwait on 2 August 1990, the international community has made every possible effort to achieve a peaceful solution of the crisis. The world community has repeatedly appealed to President Saddam Hussein to comply with the Security Council resolutions. Japan, which had traditionally enjoyed good relations with Iraq, pursued efforts at the highest level of government as well as through diplomatic channels to persuade the Iraqi leadership to withdraw from Kuwait in order to restore justice and peace to the region. In fact, just the day before yesterday, Mr. Nakayama, our Minister for Foreign Affairs, reiterated his appeal to the Iraqi leadership through the Iraqi Ambassador in Tokyo. We intend to continue this effort.

Japan expresses its firm support for the use of force by the United Nations Member States in accordance with Security Council resolution 678 (1990). Japan, for its part, made contributions last fall amounting to $2 billion to multinational forces in the Gulf, in addition to $2 billion in economic assistance to the most severely affected countries in the region. Further, in January, Japan pledged an additional contribution of $9 billion.

(Mr. Hatano, Japan)

My country recalls all too vividly the human suffering and material destruction that resulted from engaging in the Second World War. The entire nation of Japan was then reduced to ashes and its economy utterly destroyed, which made the postwar reconstruction a painstaking and long process. Japan fervently hopes that the hostilities in the Gulf will be brought to an end and that peace and justice will be restored in the region as soon as possible.

The United Nations can play a role at this critical moment and Japan welcomes all peace initiatives, including the efforts of our Secretary-General towards this end. In the event that the withdrawal of Iraq from Kuwait is realized, Japan believes that the United Nations will then play a further constructive role in resolving the problems. However, in order to achieve this goal, we must hear a clearer and unequivocal commitment from the Iraqi leadership. The Japanese Government once again urges President Saddam Hussein to demonstrate his full compliance with the relevant Security Council resolutions.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the representative of Japan for his kind words addressed to me.

The next speaker is the representative of Canada. I invite him to take a place at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. KIRSCH (Canada): In beginning my remarks, Sir, allow me to congratulate you most sincerely on your assumption of the presidency of the Council during this most difficult and challenging period. In the same vein, I should like also to pay a tribute to the skill demonstrated by your predecessor, the Permanent Representative of Zaire, who presided over the Council during the month of January.

The Security Council is meeting at a momentous time in its history. Having joined together with unprecedented unanimity and authority to deal with an extremely serious threat to international peace and security, the Council wishes now to take stock of the results of its actions.

Of the 12 resolutions adopted by the Security Council in relation to Iraq's invasion of Kuwait, the first resolution, resolution 660 (1990), clearly sets out the requirement that Iraqi troops withdraw immediately and unconditionally from Kuwait. Canada was one of the sponsors of that resolution.

The declaration issued today by the Iraqi leadership is currently under study by the Government of Canada. But we appear to be dealing with a series of conditions of a nature which may well nullify entirely any constructive signal to be drawn from the Iraqi declaration. We urge those who issued that statement to comply fully with the decisions of the Council. Unconditional Iraqi withdrawal from Kuwait would provide the opening we have been looking for, and a route to a settlement of the crisis.

Canada was a member of the Security Council that through the fall of 1990 took decisive action to ensure that the unjustified Iraqi invasion of Kuwait would not be allowed to stand. In 12 resolutions adopted by an overwhelming majority the Security Council clearly expressed the will of the world community to see Iraq quit Kuwait and to see peace and security in the region restored. Comprehensive mandatory sanctions were applied against a United Nations Member State to a degree

(Mr. Kirsch, Canada)

never seen before. Ultimately, after providing for a significant pause for peace to give diplomacy time to work, the Council authorized the use of all necessary means to ensure that its will would be enforced and peace and security restored.

Force is now being used by a number of United Nations Members to effect Iraq's withdrawal from Kuwait. Force was initiated only after all other reasonable means to secure the enforcement of the Security Council's will had been exhausted, including the valiant intervention of the Secretary-General himself. Indeed, the disappointing and painful recourse to force was the result of reaching the limits of diplomacy, not of the absence of efforts to apply it. The continuing recourse to force is clearly authorized by the legal and moral authority of the Security Council. The conflict that has stemmed from this is both legal and moral; of that there can be no doubt.

The first responsibility of the United Nations is to uphold international peace and security. All too often in its history, aggression of various sorts has not been dealt with decisively by a Security Council divided by ideological and political differences. All too often, regional conflicts and aggression were manipulated by large Powers that could shun the United Nations at will. For Canada and countries like Canada, which have based their diplomacy on the construction of a credible, effective multilateral system, the failure of the United Nations to respond effectively to Iraq's direct challenge to its authority would have once again condemned the United Nations to impotence, rendering it incapable of protecting any country's security, including our own. A discredited United Nations would make the world an even more dangerous and unpredictable place than it already is, as nations around the world, left to their own devices to ensure their security, armed themselves against potentially hostile neighbours.

(Mr. Kirsch, Canada)

The international community should be gratified that the United Nations has now proven itself capable of fulfilling the collective security function that its founders intended.

Canada is participating in the coalition of nations using force against Iraq precisely because that force is authorized by and is in support of the United Nations. Canada argued strongly against the unilateral use of force against Iraq because we believed that such force could be justified and sustained successfully only if it had United Nations sanction. Now that the United Nations has demonstrated its capacity to enforce peace and security, we are not sympathetic to those who argue that the United Nations is somehow being used wrongly. The United Nations is properly involved in international action being undertaken to reverse aggression and re-establish peace and security.

We profoundly regret the losses, on all sides, being experienced in this war. Nevertheless, the coalition has no choice but to pursue enforcement measures until the will of the United Nations is enforced. To do any less would call into question the international community's commitment to the United Nations. There is no alternative but to persevere until the goals of the United Nations are realized.

This does not mean that realistic possibilities to end the hostilities should not be pursued. Many countries, which have understandable regard for the welfare of the Iraqi and Kuwaiti peoples, especially the most vulnerable groups, have made a variety of proposals in that regard. We welcome those proposals and share in the humanitarian concerns which underlie them. But all such proposals are predicated, as they must be, on the fulfillment of the basic requirement of Iraqi withdrawal from Kuwait.

Because the rationale of this conflict is not only the liberation of Kuwait but also the protection of the values of the United Nations, its pursuit and aims must also meet the highest international standards. This means, above all,

(Mr. Kirsch, Canada)

minimizing to the extent possible civilian casualties and otherwise adhering to the laws of war. Despite the intensity of the air attack on Iraq, the coalition forces have taken great care, sometimes at great risk to themselves, to restrict wherever possible their attacks to military targets. Regrettably, the same cannot be said for the Iraqi leadership.

Canada is of the view that coalition war aims must be limited to those agreed to by the United Nations. Those aims do not include the destruction of Iraq; they are rather to enforce Security Council resolutions, to compel Saddam Hussein to quit Kuwait and to restore peace and security to the area - no more and no less.

The United Nations must also ensure that it wins the peace which follows the war. The international community should recognize that this war has unleashed passions and forces that will make a stable and secure peace very difficult. As in past wars, however, planning of successful peace must begin at an early stage. The United Nations itself was created in the aftermath of the last great war. We must ensure that the United Nations emerges from this conflict stronger, more credible and better equipped to contribute to peace in the Middle East and elsewhere.

A number of countries have already advanced useful ideas about the security, political and economic aspects of post-hostilities planning. The Prime Minister and the Secretary of State for External Affairs of Canada have made recent proposals geared to stimulating early consideration of this vital matter. They were discussed with the Secretary-General in Ottawa this past Tuesday.

(Mr. Kirsch, Canada)

While clearly it is first and foremost the business of the countries in the region to find together solutions to these problems, we believe that a significant United Nations role is necessary if the negative effects of the war are to be minimized and political reconciliation and economic reconstruction successfully implemented.

In the security field the United Nations could have a vital role in a traditional peace-keeping observer mission, which will be needed to supervise the cease-fire and withdrawal of forces, and possibly in the provision of longer-term peace-keeping forces. There may be other possibilities for direct United Nations involvement even as peace and restoration efforts are under way. The United Nations role as mediator could be important in reintegrating Iraq into the family of nations and in encouraging the use of peaceful dispute-settlement mechanisms in the Gulf region. While longer-term security arrangements are the responsibility of the States in the region, the United Nations could provide the appropriate international guarantees. United Nations support will also be essential in promoting control over the proliferation of conventional arms and weapons of mass destruction, both of which threaten the security of the region and the rest of the world.

We know that other conflicts - notably the Arab-Israeli and the Palestinian issues - contribute to political tension in the region. With the end of the Gulf crisis, renewed vigour must be devoted to the successful resolution of those issues. We are hopeful that the United Nations will play a constructive and facilitative role in this process.

The economic consequences of the peace will be daunting. The United Nations has already played an important role in the provision and distribution of humanitarian assistance to the victims of the Gulf crisis. My Government wishes to

(Mr. Kirsch, Canada)

commend the energetic humanitarian efforts undertaken by United Nations agencies and by the International Committee of the Red Cross to ease the suffering caused by Iraqi adventurism. Immediate post-war reconstruction - including the assessment of environmental damage - and longer-term development in the region can also be influenced positively by the United Nations, and Canada is prepared to play its full part in those efforts.

If there is one thing that the Gulf crisis demonstrates, it is that the United Nations is absolutely essential to a stable and prosperous world. Without the activity of the Security Council the world would not have had an agreed legal framework within which to pursue the current action to reverse the Iraqi occupation of Kuwait. It is essential that the Security Council continue to be resolute until its prescribed goals are achieved. This means, in the first instance, the fulfilment of Security Council resolutions, notably a full and unconditional Iraqi withdrawal from Kuwait. In this vein we urge again that the Iraqi leadership provide the opening for peace that the world has been waiting for by complying fully with resolution 660 (1990) and all other Security Council resolutions.

With Iraqi withdrawal from Kuwait achieved, the prospects for establishing the basis for a stable and durable peace are greater. Canada will work with diligence and determination to make the best use of the best hope there is for peace, namely, the United Nations and its capacity for collective security.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the representative of Canada for the kind words addressed to me.

The next speaker is the representative of Italy. I invite him to take a place at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. TRAXLER (Italy): At the outset, allow me to express my sincerest congratulations to you, Mr. President, on your assumption of the very onerous task of presiding over the Council for the month of February. The beginning of your work has already shown how much the Council can profit from your wise stewardship. At the same time, I should like to express our appreciation to your predecessor, the representative of Zaire, who presided over the Council during the month of January.

As a country that is deeply committed to peace, and in the light of past experience, Italy is firmly convinced that a lasting peace can be built only on the respect for international legality. For that reason, ever since the very beginning of the crisis brought about by the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait Italy has joined the other member countries of the European Community in requesting Iraq to withdraw from Kuwait and restore legality. However, since Iraq obstinately persisted in rejecting that request, the community of nations had no choice but to implement Security Council resolution 678 (1990), with which the Council, acknowledging Iraq's refusal to heed repeated requests for withdrawal, authorized Member States co-operating with the Government of Kuwait to use all necessary means to uphold and implement resolution 660 (1990) and all other relevant resolutions and to restore international peace and security to the area.

Italy, which has always upheld the need to comply with international legality, felt itself in duty bound to join in the effort of the community of States to restore it. Therefore, under the terms agreed upon in association with the coalition of countries co-operating with the Government of Kuwait, Italy has initiated military actions, of which it keeps the Council regularly informed, in compliance with operative paragraph 4 of resolution 678 (1990). Moreover, pursuant to operative paragraph 3 of that resolution, Italy has provided some logistical support to the coalition forces.

(Mr. Traxler, Italy)

My country is thus acting within the framework of, and in strict compliance with, the resolutions of the Security Council. The aims of our action are those defined in resolution 678 (1990), and none other. Certainly, we do not seek any advantage, nor do we pursue any goal, save the restoration of peace and security in the area. Since the scope of that action is so precisely limited, we deplore Iraq's attempts at extending the conflict through its attack against Israel, and we sincerely hope that every effort will be made on all sides to limit civilian casualties to a minimum. At the same time, we urge the Government of Iraq to comply with the provisions of the Geneva Convention concerning the treatment of prisoners of war, and we take note of the responsibilities of the present Iraqi leaders for the violations they are committing.

It is obviously my country's warmest wish that Iraq should finally heed the appeals that are incesssantly being made and decide to comply with resolution 660 (1990) and all other subsequent pertinent resolutions, thereby making it possible to restore peace to the region. In fact, in Italy's view, Iraq's withdrawal from Kuwait and the reestablishment of international legality in that country are the necessary prerequisites for the establishment of any new security set-up in the area and for the advancing of any solution to the problems still pending in the Middle East.

(Mr. Traxler, Italy)

We therefore welcomed this morning the announcement by the Iraqi Revolutionary Command Council, and we sincerely hoped that it might turn out to be a harbinger of peace. However, resolution 660 (1990) calls for an immediate and unconditional withdrawal of the Iraqi forces from Kuwait. By the inclusion of a number of conditions, the Iraqi text appears not to be in keeping with the text of resolution 660 (1990), or with any of the other subsequent relevant resolutions of the Security Council. These resolutions represent, and indeed express, the will of the international community, and peace can be restored only in compliance with that will.

Iraq's initiative might represent a move in the right direction, but further steps will be needed to bring Iraqi statements and - even more - Iraqi actions into conformity with the will of the international community. Let us hope that the forthcoming conversations in Moscow will prove fruitful to this end.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the representative of Italy for his kind words addressed to me.

The next speaker is the representative of Australia. I invite him to take a place at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. WILENSKI (Australia): I wish to join others, Sir, in congratulating you on your assumption of the presidency of the Council at this difficult time. I am particularly pleased that one of my delegation's very rare appearances before the Council should be under your stewardship.

I should also like to thank the Permanent Representative of Zaire for his able presidency over the Council in January.

I address the Council today as the representative of one of the many United Nations Member States working together, under the auspices of the Council's resolutions, to liberate Kuwait.

Towards that end, as we have already advised the Council, three Royal

(Mr. Wilenski, Australia)

Australian Navy vessels are at present operating in the Persian Gulf as part of the coalition forces of Member States of the United Nations.

No nation should ever resort to the use of force, however well justified under international law, except with the greatest reluctance. However, the founders of the United Nations recognized that peace enforcement was a necessary, if regrettable, last resort. The system of collective security, enshrined in the United Nations Charter, relies on the ultimate recourse to the joint use of force under international sanction, when other means fail to deter aggression or to compel aggressors to give up their conquests. In sanctioning the use of force to secure Iraq's withdrawal from Kuwait, the Security Council is working within the system carefully constructed by the founders of the United Nations.

The Security Council's handling of Iraq's invasion of Kuwait demonstrates a strengthening of the cooperative spirit in the international community and indicates its desire to make more effective use of the mechanisms of the United Nations in dealing with threats to international peace and security.

As Australia's Prime Minister has observed,

"If we fail in this first test of the new international order after the cold war, the consequences for our medium- and long-term security and for that of many other countries are deeply disturbing".

Military action in the Persian Gulf is being carried out in accordance with authorization of the Security Council in its resolution 678 (1990) and for the goals it has specifically set in that and preceding resolutions. Those goals are to secure Iraq's unconditional withdrawal from Kuwait and to re-establish Kuwait's sovereignty and independence. There are no other motives for the coalition's action. These two goals are, and will remain, the end point of the multinational forces' action.

We have this morning heard the announcement from Radio Baghdad concerning

(Mr. Wilenski, Australia)

resolution 660 (1990). Unfortunately, it does not appear that the statement signals Iraq's willingness to comply with the provisions of that resolution and subsequent resolutions.

The Security Council was compelled to authorize the use of military force by the action of the Government of Iraq. Hostilities began not on 16 January, as some seem to suggest, but on 2 August last year, when Iraq invaded Kuwait, later purporting to annex it.

The international community, working through the Security Council, reacted swiftly and decisively to Iraq's aggression. The Council adopted 12 resolutions setting out clearly the means to resolve the crisis in accordance with the principles of the Charter. The message and extent of international support could not have been made clearer to Iraq.

While every effort was made to persuade Iraq to withdraw peacefully from Kuwait, Iraqi troops continued to fortify their positions in Kuwait and to assault and subjugate the Kuwaiti people.

Amnesty International, in a report on 19 December 1990, documented the repeated violations of the human rights of those who remained in Kuwait, including detention, torture, rape and summary executions. The Council also heard first-hand accounts of Iraqi abuses in Kuwait, in a moving session on 27 November 1990, when Kuwaitis who had escaped from Kuwait testified to their experiences.

Every international initiative, every effort at diplomacy, aimed at resolving the crisis by peaceful means was or rejected by Iraq.

The Government of Iraq failed to respond to attempts by other Arab and Islamic countries to bring an early end to the crisis. It failed to respond when other non-aligned countries added their voices to the calls for Iraq's withdrawal. It failed to respond when the Soviet Union and members of the European Community searched for a hint of flexibility. It failed to respond when the United States

(Mr. Wilenski, Australia)

Government time and again made clear its wish for a peaceful solution. On 12 occasions it failed to respond to the demands of this body, ignoring its obligations under the Charter. Finally, even at the eleventh hour, as the Secretary-General, a man of outstanding diplomatic skill and human compassion, representing all United Nations Members, made a last-minute appeal to President Saddam Hussein, again Iraq failed to respond.

Not once in five months did President Saddam Hussein give any indication of ordering a withdrawal from Kuwait, nor did he show any sign that the damage being done to Iraq's economy and the suffering of its peoples through the stringent implementation of economic sanctions would induce him to comply with the Council's resolutions.

With the passing of the 15 January deadline, and in the face of continued Iraqi intransigence, the members of the international coalition were left with no alternative but to use force, as authorized by the Council's resolution 678 (1990), under Chapter VII of the United Nations Charter, to remove Iraq from Kuwait. As I have previously said, there can be no mistaking whose is the responsibility for the conflict. The Government of Iraq alone must bear that responsibility.

Australia shares the profound concerns expressed by others about the impact on civilians caught up in the conflict and the casualties on both sides. As I recalled a moment ago, the Kuwaiti people have been the victims of brutal and intentional human rights violations for over six months. The plight of the many citizens of third countries deprived of their livelihoods by Iraq's actions has also deeply concerned the international community.

Australia has joined with other countries in providing financial and other assistance to meet these humanitarian needs through both the United Nations and the International Committee of the Red Cross. To date, Australia has pledged $A 5 million to assist international relief efforts.

(Mr. Wilenski, Australia)

Civilians will also inevitably be tragically affected by the current phase of hostilities. My Government has publicly expressed its deep regret about the loss of civilian lives. The members of the international coalition have made clear that all efforts will be made to safeguard civilians and civilian sites from the effects of allied attack. In stark contrast, Iraq has compounded its attacks on the civilian population of Kuwait with further attacks aimed at civilian targets in Saudi Arabia and Israel. Furthermore, President Saddam Hussein has threatened to resort to weapons of mass destruction in his efforts to hold on to Kuwait.

Like all members of the international coalition, Australia hopes that our efforts to liberate Kuwait will succeed in as short a time as possible and with the minimum loss of life to combatants as well as civilians from both sides. There can however be no resiling from the goal of liberating Kuwait. Iraq holds the key to the resolution of this conflict. It should reconsider the damage it is inflicting, especially on its own people and immediately and unconditionally withdraw from Kuwait in accordance with the Security Council's resolutions.

When Kuwait is free again, an equally important challenge will then await the international community, namely the restoration of peace and stability in the region.

There is a clear willingness of all those involved in the coalition effort to move on from the Gulf crisis and, strengthened by the principles to emerge from the successful resolution of that crisis, to address all the longstanding problems of the Middle East, including a just resolution of the Palestinian issue and the continuing security of Israel. As others have observed, the successful resolution of the Gulf crisis will provide a springboard to address these issues.

Australia, for its part, stands ready to assist in playing whatever role it can to advance the cause of peace in the Middle East.

(Mr. Wilenski, Australia)

There is already considerable discussion of the need to intensify efforts to secure and put in place an appropriate security regime for the region. This will need to cover a range of diverse issues - military, political and economic - including territorial guarantees, arms control agreements, dispute settlement mechanisms and economic reconstruction.

Once the Gulf crisis has been resolved, Australia looks forward to the United Nations and this Council showing the same determination to address these complex issues vital to the peace and stability of the Middle East. Australia will play its part in the international effort that will be needed for this purpose.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the representative of Australia for his kind words addressed to me.

The next speaker is the representative of Chile. I invite him to take a place at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. SOMAVIA (Chile) (interpretation from Spanish): I wish to congratulate you, Sir, on your exercising the presidency of the Security Council with the brilliance and skill with which we are already familiar, and also to place on record our appreciation of the work carried out by the outgoing President, the Ambassador of Zaire.

The purpose of my statement is to share with the Council some thoughts of the Government of Chile at a time when nearly 28 weeks have passed since Iraq invaded Kuwait and nearly 4 weeks since the allied forces began military action.

I should like to reiterate that Chile supported and continues to support the 12 resolutions adopted by the Security Council on this tragic situation. In the early hours of 2 August we vigorously condemned the breach of international law and peaceful coexistence as a result of the attack on Kuwait. We quickly implemented the agreed sanctions and since then we have constantly supported the political

(Mr. Somavia, Chile)

initiatives to bring about the withdrawal of Iraq from Kuwait and find a peaceful comprehensive solution to the Gulf conflict.

We understand that Iraq's intransigence created the need for the Council to authorize the use of force in order to ensure respect for its resolutions and that many countries considered it necessary to use force to put an end to the conflict which Iraq began on 2 August. Chile is not part of the military coalition, but it has respected the decision which it considers to be legal, in keeping with Security Council resolution 678 (1990).

Chile's position is based on a diplomatic tradition of respect for international law and the inviolability of treaties. We have always considered the defence of principles and law as the basic source of international protection for the smaller countries.

Our position is also based on our belief that, after the cold war, mankind needs to build new forms of international relations based on peace, cooperation and respect for all peoples and countries, whether great Powers or small nations.

We are particularly concerned about the breach of basic rules of international coexistence. The use of force to settle disputes between States endangers peace and stability. Respect for international law and the principles embodied in the United Nations Charter is the essential guarantee of the survival of States.

What is at stake in the Gulf goes beyond the restoration of Kuwait as a sovereign State. What is at stake is the sanctity of the principles of the Charter, the foundation of civilized relations between States, which we want to see respected in all circumstances. Hence, in order to make sure that this fundamental value prevails, it will be necessary in future to react with the same determination in similar situations, should they unfortunately recur. We feel that there must not be a selective application of the principles of the Charter. This is valid for yesterday, for today and for tomorrow.

(Mr. Somavia, Chile)

For all these reasons, we believe that the actions of the United Nations are so very important. If for some reason it were not possible to obtain compliance with the resolutions of the Security Council, the international community would be set back many years in its efforts to create a more peaceful and more just world.

It is from the perspective of these values that Chile wishes to share with the members of the Council some thoughts about the development of the Gulf situation, on the basis of what was agreed to by the Foreign Ministers of the countries members of the Group of Rio at their recent meeting, on 28 January in Caracas, which has been circulated as an official document of the Council.

Above all, we are concerned about the people, the individuals and the untold suffering that so many innocent victims have been experiencing since 2 August. We shall never forget that behind all this there are human beings, be they in the military or civilians, who are suffering and dying; families living in areas of the conflict and not in surroundings of international politics, which we are discussing here, but in tragic uncertainty about their own survival or that of their dear ones.

(Mr. Somavia, Chile)

As the President of Chile, Mr. Patricio Aylwin, has said, we are all saddened when we see human beings killing each other in a distant land.

We are concerned also about the actions that have threatened the environment in the Gulf region, with unforeseeable consequences and ecological effects.

We note also the growing anxiety and concern in the world about the risks of escalation of the confrontation. That is why, like other representatives who have spoken here, we have no doubt that we all clearly feel that the armed conflict should be ended as soon as possible and that Kuwait should again become a free and sovereign State, with its territorial integrity intact.

Until that happens, it will be necessary to act with particular care in regard to everything related to humanitarian law. This includes compliance with the Geneva Conventions in all their aspects, in particular in relation to the treatment of prisoners of war, respect for and protection of civilian persons, and the availability of humanitarian assistance for the victims of the conflict, especially women, children and the elderly. Of particular moral importance for us is the urgent need to avoid recourse to chemical and biological weapons and weapons of mass or indiscriminate destruction, including nuclear devices. We share the concerns of the International Red Cross and support the initiatives undertaken by the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the World Health Organization. We echo the appeals made by His Holiness John Paul II in relation to all these questions. They should be the subject of regular consultations by the Security Council in the immediate future.

In this connection, allow me to quote from a statement made yesterday by the Acting Minister for Foreign Affairs of Chile, in which he says that

"The Government of Chile deeply regrets the shedding of innocent blood and the devastating effects of this war. It draws attention to the need to observe

(Mr. Somavia, Chile)

the fundamental provision contained in article 48 of the Additional Protocols to the 1949 Geneva Conventions, which distinguishes between civilian persons and property, on the one hand, and military combattants and objectives, on the other. In addition, of particular applicability are the provisions of articles 51, paragraph 7, which prohibits the utilization of civilian persons to conceal, favour or obstruct military operations, and article 57, which requires that in military operations that are carried out constant care be taken to protect civilian persons from their effects."

In addition to the foregoing, we think we must make every effort to bring about a peaceful political solution to the conflict, in the context of the United Nations resolutions. However far away or difficult this may seem, we must not stray from this path, for it is the main justification for the existence of the United Nations. We recognize the various efforts made in that direction which are being discussed today in this body. We should consider all initiatives, from wherever they come, that may help to ensure effective compliance with the Council's resolutions.

In this connection, we support the role of the Secretary-General in this task of peace, and we point out that he should have the greatest latitude to act in accordance with his perception of the opportunities and needs that arise, most particularly in humanitarian issues. We categorically reject the obscene language and dubious procedures being used - without success - to cast aspersions on the Secretary-General's excellent record in the service of peace. In the current circumstances, the strengthening of the institution of the secretary-generalship of the United Nations is of the utmost importance. This includes the orderly preparation, here and now, for what should be the important presence of the United Nations in the aftermath of the conflict, once it has been brought to an end. Many

(Mr. Somavia, Chile)

tasks will have to be carried out, and it will be necessary to prepare for them so that they can be effectively fulfilled. We wish to repeat here what we have said on other occasions - that Chile is prepared to cooperate to the extent of its limited possibilities in this delicate task.

Accordingly, Chile believes that the Secretary-General's appeal of 15 January remains valid and still constitutes an effective point of departure for the reaching of a comprehensive understanding in the region that takes into account all the interests involved and, following the withdrawal of Iraq from Kuwait, can lead to the advent of a new order of peace in the region, based on the participation of all the parties concerned and compliance with all the United Nations resolutions - to use the words of the Foreign Ministers of the Rio Group.

On the basis of the experience acquired, we must reflect in future on the relationship between the Security Council and the rest of the United Nations. Clearly, the political agreements that have made it possible to take such important decisions would have been impossible during the cold war. This new reality could be an objective step forward that would enable the Council truly to become a "principal organ" of the United Nations, as envisaged in the Charter. At the same time, it represents an enormous challenge to the capability of institutional designs for establishing creative methods of work to ensure that in significant decisions such as those concerning war and peace countries that are not members of the Council are able appropriately to express their views.

When this crisis has ended, it would also be a good idea to reflect on the implications for the work of the United Nations of the machinery activated by Security Council resolution 678 (1990) for the use of force and the maintenance of peace, and on the role that the resolution itself assigns to the Council in deciding "to remain seized of the matter". This must be done in order

(Mr. Somavia, Chile)

appropriately to harmonize authorization and implementation in such a delicate matter.

That leads me to the need to begin within the United Nations serious and well-prepared work on the conceptions of security that befit the post-cold-war world and the situation we shall inherit from the Gulf conflict. Every day it becomes clearer that security must be viewed as an integrated notion with strategic and military, but also economic, social, cultural and human, dimensions. At the same time, we must expand the horizons of security to include not only matters relating to the security of states, whether externally or internally, but also a dimension that is as important, if not more important - namely, the security of the individual, of the human being, socially and individually.

All this leads us to the conclusion that the United Nations, including the Security Council, has before it major tasks. Peace requires more imagination and creativity than does war. Vision, courage and determination are needed to promote a world of dialogue and understanding, a world of security for weak and strong alike, a world where the permanent members of the Security Council exercise their responsibilities as a form of public service to mankind as a whole, a world where all the Members of the United Nations feel that they are participants in the building of a planet of greater well-being, equitably shared.

(Mr. Somavia, Chile)

In the final analysis, it is a great challenge for our civilization and for humanistic values shared by the great majority of cultures and religions of the world. There are spiritual demands that, even in times when conflicts seem most insoluble, must not be forgotten. Perhaps giving the deliberations of the United Nations a human face would further enhance the dignity of its lofty and beautiful mission.

I cannot conclude without saying again that the first step on the path to peace in the Gulf is Iraq's withdrawal from Kuwait.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the representative of Chile for his kind words addressed to me.

The next speaker is the representative of Germany. I invite him to take a place at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. zu RANTZAU (Germany): Having just taken up my functions as the German Permanent Representative to the United Nations, I appreciate having the occasion today to address the Security Council.

I should like to express my sincere congratulations to you, Sir, on your assumption of the important office of President of the Security Council for the month of February. We are indeed fortunate to have you as President. I should also like to pay tribute to Ambassador Bagbeni Adeito Nzengeya for the exemplary stewardship with which he steered the work of the Council in the month of January.

The United Nations is at present facing what may be the greatest challenge since its foundation. It is now up to the United Nations to meet this challenge and to live up to its most noble goal enshrined in the Charter: to maintain and restore international peace and security and respect for the basic principles of international law.

(Mr. zu Rantzau, Germany)

The war in the Gulf began on 2 August 1990 with the brutal invasion of Kuwait by Iraq, and not on 16 January 1991 with the armed response from members of the international community.

For more than five months, the international community made constant diplomatic efforts to try to persuade Saddam Hussein to withdraw from Kuwait. The Secretary-General worked actively for a solution of this crisis. The German Government, together with its European partners, joined in these efforts from the very beginning in order to contribute to a peaceful solution of the conflict on the basis of the resolutions of the Security Council. President Saddam Hussein declined. He chose war. Even today, he can still choose to restore peace by implementing fully the resolutions of the Security Council. If he really is finally prepared to do so, he must make an unequivocal and unconditional commitment to withdraw from Kuwait, backed by immediate concrete steps leading to full compliance with the Security Council resolutions.

At stake is the future of all the States of the Middle East region.

At stake is the right to exist of Israel, against which genocide is being perpetrated by a dictator for the second time this century.

At stake is the chance to establish a new peaceful order in which all States, including small ones, can feel safe.

Germany stands firmly behind the Security Council resolutions which express the will of the world community that Iraq must withdraw immediately and unconditionally from Kuwait and that the legitimate authority and the sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity of Kuwait must be restored.

Germany stands by the side of the coalition seeking to enforce the resolutions of the Security Council. We support substantially and in many ways all the countries which, through their armed forces, are carrying the burden of this campaign for the community of nations to restore the rule of law.

(Mr. zu Rantzau, Germany)

We reaffirm our solidarity with Israel. Our historical and moral responsibility has to be proved in this unique situation. We are committed to strengthening the defensive capabilities of Israel in the face of an existential threat.

We stand on the side of the Arab countries which are being attacked by Iraq's dictator or which suffer from other consequences of Saddam Hussein's aggression. The German people are not indifferent to the tragedy and suffering of war. But aggression must never be allowed to stand.

Germany's solidarity with the international coalition in its endeavours to enforce Security Council resolutions, and its determination to support the particularly affected front-line States is not expressed in words alone.

Within existing constitutional constraints on German military participation in United Nations operations, Germany contributes substantially to the military burden-sharing. So far over $9.6 billion has been made available to the coalition States and to Israel. As a member of the Atlantic Alliance, Germany meets its obligation particularly towards its partner Turkey.

Important financial and technical assistance is being made available for the economic stabilization of countries particularly affected in the area.

From the beginning of the crisis the German Government has paid particular attention to emergency humanitarian measures in order to alleviate the suffering of the refugees and the civilian population.

All together, German contributions so far amount to nearly $11.5 billion.

All common efforts to bring President Saddam Hussein to reason must not prevent us from looking beyond this war and restoring peace at the earliest possible moment.

(Mr. zu Rantzau, Germany)

The main priority after the Gulf war is over will be to establish a just and lasting system of peace and stability in the region. For over 40 years the Arab-Israeli conflict and a whole series of other conflicts have been crippling the region, making it waste its resources on armaments and war. This experience must serve as a catalyst for offering the entire region a brighter future. Arrangements for a common system of security have to be developed within the region itself. The nations in the area have the human resources and the capital to transform their region into one of peace, progress and prosperity.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the representative of Germany for his kind words addressed to me.

The next speaker is the representative of the Netherlands. I invite him to take a place at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. De MARCHANT et d'ANSEMBOURG (Netherlands): At the outset, I should like to congratulate you, Sir, on your assumption of the presidency of the Council for the month of February. We are fortunate to have you as President. At the same time, I should like to thank the Permanent Representative of Zaire for his able presidency during the month of January.

Today's meeting is the result of a chain of events that began on 2 August 1990 when Iraq invaded a sovereign State Member of the United Nations. This breach of the peace constituted a grave violation of the basic tenets of the Charter of the United Nations. The Council, acting on the very night of the invasion, in its resolution 660 (1990) condemned the Iraqi invasion and demanded the immediate and unconditional withdrawal of all the Iraqi forces from Kuwait. In its resolution 662 (1990), the Council declared the annexation of Kuwait by Iraq null and void.

However, Iraq has failed to comply with these and subsequent resolutions. Even the economic sanctions imposed by the Council and implemented by virtually all States, in some cases at great cost to their own economies, proved ineffective even after a number of months. When that last chance for a peaceful solution evaporated, while the brutal destruction of Kuwait continued unabated, it became clear that the international community had to resort to other measures.

As the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands stated in this context in his address to the General Assembly on 26 September 1990:

> "Sometimes the countering of might with might is unavoidable... The sad story of the League of Nations has taught the world that we must stand firm and united in the face of aggression". (A/45/PV.9, p. 53-55)

Resolution 678 (1990) authorized all necessary means to uphold and implement resolution 660 (1990) and all subsequent relevant resolutions of the Council. However, in order to enable the Government of Iraq to comply with the resolutions before force would be used, resolution 678 (1990) also created a pause of goodwill.

(Mr. De Marchant et D'Ansembourg, Netherlands)

A large number of appeals and efforts at dialogue, including a visit of the Secretary-General to Baghdad and an offer by the 12 States members of the European Community to meet with the Iraqi Foreign Minister, proved in vain. When finally the multinational force started its military action to enforce the Council's decisions, the Twelve expressed their deep regret that use of force had become necessary to oblige Iraq to withdraw from Kuwait and thus re-establish international legality.

In the course of the subsequent armed confrontation, the Iraqi leadership has shown a regrettable disregard for the rules of international law. Furthermore, by his unprovoked missile attacks on Israel, President Saddam Hussein has attempted to draw that country into the Gulf conflict. The present course of action of the leaders of Iraq not only constitutes a threat to the region but will inevitably spell disaster for their own country and its population. It is my Government's fervent wish that this conflict, with its numerous victims, will rapidly come to an end. All that is needed is Iraq's unconditional compliance with the Council's resolutions.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the representative of the Netherlands for his kind words addressed to me.

The next speaker is the representative of Malaysia. I invite him to take a place at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. RAZALI (Malaysia): I should like to congratulate you, Sir, on your assumption of the presidency of the Council for this month. Despite your as yet brief stay at the United Nations, you have very quickly made us privy to and beneficiary of your experience and skills. These, coupled with the respect that all of us have for your country and Government, will ensure the proper stewardship of the Council at a time when the Council must most certainly assert itself. I

(Mr. Razali, Malaysia)

should also like to extend my appreciation to Ambassador Bagbeni of Zaire, a much respected colleague of long standing, for his outstanding presidency in January.

The statement made by the Iraqi Revolutionary Command Council that was broadcast over Radio Baghdad today has introduced an important new element to this debate. I would like to appeal to the Council seriously to weigh every aspect of that statement. Proposals in the past were predicated on the necessity of unconditional Iraqi withdrawal from Kuwait and the reinstatement of Kuwait's Government, and offered, inter alia, an end to the military offensive against Iraq, the departure of foreign troops, and the discussion of larger issues, such as Palestine.

Malaysia, together with Yemen, Colombia and Cuba, also worked last year towards such a proposal, which the Council had circulated as document S/21986 of 7 December 1990. Malaysia in turn has supported all the individual and group efforts of the Non-Aligned Movement and the Organization of the Islamic Conference, and has joined the collective appeal to prevail upon Iraq to heed the call of the international community. The leaders of Iraq who have worked so hard to build the country into a modern, proud and successful nation owe it to their people to seek peace now.

Malaysia hopes that the statement made by the Iraqi Revolutionary Command Council indicates a positive step in the right direction on the part of Iraq towards heeding the appeal of the international community. Even if that statement is encumbered by certain conditions, it is the business of the Council to address itself in totality to every aspect of the statement, to seek clarification on the areas that are not clear or have not been spelled out in relation to the pertinent Security Council resolutions.

(Mr. Razali, Malaysia)

At this stage, the statement should be seen as an important gesture upon which to develop, certainly not to reject outright. The Council, as the custodian of international peace and security, must respond carefully and constructively in examining all possibilities that may well offer an opening for a breakthrough towards peace. The Council should not make the mistake of allowing doubts to nullify or obstruct the possibility of initiating diplomatic actions. Further, the Council should not allow hardened national positions of Governments to discourage or obstruct possible actions of the Council.

Regrettably, certain countries have come to hasty conclusions. These may have the effect of prematurely killing any prospects for the Council or the United Nations to pursue peace constructively. Malaysia will regard that as highly regrettable. We cannot believe our ears when we hear of reports dismissing the statement as a hoax or a sham, or of appeals to the people of Iraq to take matters into their own hands to make their leader Saddam Hussein step aside.

(Mr. Razali, Malaysia)

It is to be reasserted here - and Malaysia has the right to say this, having been one of the then Security Council members that voted in favour of all the resolutions, including resolution 678 (1990) - that the military action against Iraq is a United Nations-authorized international enforcement action under Chapter VII of the Charter, not a result of Article 51 and certainly not a war between any of the allied countries and Iraq per se. We have to be very clear about this. No country, however powerful, can arrogate to itself the power to conduct the war entirely on the basis of its own imperatives and interests.

As stated in the 25 January statement by the Government of Malaysia, the massive bombardments and levelling of Iraq indicate clearly an alarming escalation of the military offensive that may well go beyond the original objectives contained in the relevant resolutions. We are also disturbed by statements by some prominent leaders talking about aims of the war effort that are clearly outside the scope of resolution 678 (1990). Further, we do not see at all a clear central role for the United Nations, at least in monitoring and reviewing various aspects of the conflict. The Council has to be reminded that the participating countries are accountable for the actions of their forces to the broader membership of the United Nations.

At this moment it appears that there are no means for, or attempts by, the United Nations or the international community to ensure respect for strictures on the conduct of the war. The Council has been, as it were, sidelined, and the role of the Secretary-General has been placed in abeyance because of the situation. A significant aspect of Malaysia's dissatisfaction with the war is due to that, and to the inability of the Council to do anything about it.

(Mr. Razali, Malaysia)

The war has proceeded for 30 days, and it was only two days ago that the Council was in a position to have a general discussion about it. Even now it is being done in closed session, which is indicative of the attempts to prevent the Council from properly addressing the war in all its aspects.

It is no comfort to listen to repeated assurances that civilians are not targets of bombardments when there is an abundance of evidence to show that many houses and other buildings have been flattened by aerial bombardments; there must be hundreds or thousands of civilian casualties. In a collective enforcement action under Chapter VII of the Charter there is even more reason for the allied forces to abide strictly by the humanitarian rules of war and international law, especially with regard to the safety of the millions of civilians, including women and children, caught in the war.

With military actions in their fifth week and with an escalation that presages a bloody, painful and miserable period ahead, it is high time that the Council took stock of the conduct of the war and of developments related to the war. The International Committee of the Red Cross has pointed out its concern about the millions of civilians caught up in the violence without shelter or protection from bombings and occupation. Many people in Malaysia and in other countries, particularly Muslim countries, cannot comprehend the scale and intensity of the offensive against Iraq, the devastation wrought on houses, other buildings, infrastructure and economic potentials and historical and religious sites, or the casualties among innocent civilians. Is all this being done in the name of an international determination to free Kuwait? "All necessary means", those fateful words in resolution 678 (1990): are they being interpreted in their destructive sense as a license?

(Mr. Razali, Malaysia)

All this has created serious worries and agony for many countries, particularly Muslim countries and the third world. For Malaysia's part, while as part of the international community we hold consistently to the message directed to Iraq about our determination to evict Iraq from Kuwait and to reinstate Kuwait, to the extent of authorizing force we should also like to transmit another message on behalf of our countries and our peoples about the agonies and sufferings being undergone in the region and elsewhere. That international message is not only for the Iraqi leaders, but also for leaders in the United States, the United Kingdom and other countries which are conducting the military offensive. War, as always, dehumanizes everything. We have to remind ourselves constantly - and this is the responsibility of the Council - that our pursuit of international objectives must not dehumanize us as an institution. When a military action wipes out hundreds of innocent lives, as happened recently, and when one tries to ward off responsibility with transparent devices and to use military doublespeak to blur the impact of one's actions, one is already going down that road of dehumanization. At the same time, while we ask ourselves questions about the scope and conduct of the war we must obviously also ask Iraqi leaders how much more destruction they are prepared to take, with untold misery for their people, before they will accept and undertake a withdrawal from Kuwait, as Iraq certainly must do.

Compared to the situation before 2 August 1990, when the international scene was flushed with confidence in a genuine internationalism and hopes for a new world order, we have gone into reverse. The possibility of an escalated conflict has raised the spectre of general instability and turmoil internationally. Important international structures will be weakened, affecting the role of the United Nations as a vehicle for conflict management and resolution.

(Mr. Razali, Malaysia)

Severe ramifications - political and economic and with a bearing on the religious in the Muslim countries - are also very much in evidence. The manner of the military offensive and the ill-considered rhetoric from some countries that are conducting military action have wounded many Muslims. The Council cannot be oblivious to these developments. There are also many in Muslim countries who, rightly or wrongly, are quite convinced that the original objectives of the Security Council resolutions have been forgotten and that there is a coalition of forces to destroy completely an ancient Muslim country, Iraq, historically the confluence of culture and civilization and in contemporary times a source of pride for its modernization and development and a bulwark against Israeli aggression and designs.

Also, we have heard reports about plans being worked out by the major Powers for the future security arrangements for the region in the aftermath of the Gulf war. These seem most insensitive, a throwback to the colonial era when victors distributed among themselves the spoils of war and imposed peace on the defeated and the weak, and certainly unacceptable and incompatible with the notion of a new world order. No Power, however powerful, should play architect or policeman for the region, outright or using surrogates.

As a Muslim nation, Malaysia cannot fail to appeal to Muslim countries, on whichever side they are in this conflict, not to allow this crisis to affect the Palestinian cause, represented by the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), even if some are not in full agreement with the position of PLO leaders on the crisis. The Scud missile attacks on Israel have been condemned, but let that not be a reason for the Israeli Government to exploit the situation, turning everything to its advantage. Already the Israelis have bombed parts of southern Lebanon on several occasions in the past few weeks and have committed atrocious violations of

(Mr. Razali, Malaysia)

the Geneva Convention in the occupied territories without so much as the blink of an eye from the Security Council. The Security Council and partners in the coalition should weigh the recent moves against years and years of repeated arrogant rejection by Israel of Security Council resolutions pertaining to occupied Palestinian and Arab territories and Israel's gross violations of the Geneva Convention.

Above all it must be underlined that thoughts of a partial solution to the Palestinian problem as part of a process of a future security arrangement for the region are unjust and would not ensure long-term peace and stability in the region. Such an idea is tantamount to no more than the so-called Palestine solution of the 1921 Cairo conference.

The question may be asked of the Council whether the use of force as an international weapon for the enforcement of collective security in the name of the United Nations can be regarded as a successful and tenable experiment. If what we are witnessing now is a precursor of what would constitute a future dimension of United Nations action in the post-Cold War era, then Malaysia must conclude that the initial attempt is not salutary and does not bode well for the future.

(Mr. Razali, Malaysia)

Finally, Malaysia would like to appeal to the Council to eschew skepticism and negativism, even if the past record of attempts to plead with Iraqi leaders for withdrawal and peace has been disappointing. Malaysia believes that now is the time for the Council to entrust the Secretary-General with reactivating and intensifying all diplomatic efforts. The permanent members of the Council have a special responsibility in this context, especially the Soviet Union, which has maintained a continuing initiative to keep open all chances for peace. The Non-Aligned Movement can also play a role here as well. The Council could well help to co-ordinate all the initiatives at hand and to bring them under a kind of United Nations umbrella.

All of the peoples of the world desire an end to the war. The onus and the responsibility obviously lie with Iraq. But the Council should not be placed in a position where it is so determined and resolute about war that it is unable to respond appropriately to chances for peace. It is my understanding that there are opinions in the Council in favour to reviewing the current military operations in Kuwait and Iraq that involve aerial bombardments of areas with large concentrations of civilians and in city centres. Malaysia would like to support such moves.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the representative of Malaysia for his kind words addressed to me and my country.

The next speaker is the representative of Yugoslavia. I invite him to take a place at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. SILOVIC (Yugoslavia): At the outset, Sir, let me congratulate you on your assumption of the presidency of the Security Council at a time when international developments call for wisdom as well as for resolve and determination. There is no doubt in my mind that your experience and diplomatic skill will contribute to a successful outcome of this important meeting.

(Mr. Silovic, Yugoslavia)

I would also like to express appreciation to your predecessor, His Excellency Mr. Bagbeni Adeito Nzengeya, Permanent Representative of Zaire, for the able manner in which he conducted the work of the Council during the trying month of January.

I also want to congratulate the newly-elected members of the Security Council, namely, Austria, Belgium, Ecuador, India and the country you yourself represent, Zimbabwe.

In our opinion it is timely and fitting for the Security Council to convene to review the situation in the Guli. The Gulf crisis and the resulting conflict are dangerous in more ways than one and arouse concern. The concentration of military power, coupled with highly sophisticated technology and the possible use of weapons of mass destruction, adds a particularly dangerous dimension to this conflict and threatens to escalate it horizontally as well as in intensity.

Ever since the outbreak of the Gulf crisis, which was caused by the Iraqi invasion and occupation of Kuwait on 2 August 1990, Yugoslavia has fully supported the resolute stance taken by the Security Council.

At the initiative of Yugoslavia, as current Chairman of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, the Movement, as early as the beginning of August, strongly condemned the invasion and annexation of Kuwait and demanded the withdrawal of Iraqi troops and the restoration of Kuwait's territorial integrity and legitimate Government. That position was unequivocally adopted at the Ministerial Meeting of Non-Aligned Countries held at New York on 4 October 1990.

Prior to the 15 January deadline set by the Security Council Yugoslavia had tirelessly endeavoured to contribute to a peaceful solution and to prevent a military showdown. To that end we had meetings and contacts with the Heads of State and foreign ministers of practically all of the countries of the region directly involved and with the permanent and other members of the Security Council,

(Mr. Silovic, Yugoslavia)

the European Community and the United Nations Secretary-General. The visit of the Foreign Minister of Yugoslavia, His Excellency Mr. Budimir Loncar to Baghdad and his talks with President Saddam Hussein and Foreign Minister Tariq Aziz were of particular importance. Of course, we have also been constantly in touch with a large number of non-aligned countries.

Following the outbreak of military operations, which started despite all peace-oriented efforts because of Iraq's intransigent refusal to comply with Security Council resolutions, our efforts continued and have been stepped up. We still believe that no efforts should be spared to restore peace as soon as possible. Iraqi compliance with the Security Council resolutions would create conditions for bringing the hostilities to a conclusion and avoiding further losses as well as for peacefully addressing the crisis and the problems of the entire region.

Accordingly, our approach is clearly defined. The action in favour of peace should start with the withdrawal of Iraqi troops from Kuwait. The initial step is, of course, the Iraqi commitment to comply with Security Council resolution 660 (1990). The announcement made earlier this morning in Baghdad understandably caused numerous and different reactions. We are aware of its content but perhaps not of its full meaning. In our opinion, it might signal new possibilities and deserves to be studied further.

The withdrawal of Iraqi troops itself should be accompanied by a cessation of hostilities that should be monitored and guaranteed. In this respect the Secretary-General, in his appeal of 15 January, presented valuable ideas. That would create conditions for the solution of all outstanding problems by peaceful means. Full implementation of the relevant Security Council resolutions would also create conditions for the withdrawal of all foreign troops from the region.

(Mr. Silovic, Yugoslavia)

The next step would include the opening of the peace process in the region. The solution of the crisis in the Persian Gulf should contribute to the international community's approaching with equal determination and urgency the Arab-Israeli conflict, at the core of which is the problem of Palestine.

All of this is a prerequisite for comprehensive stability, security, peace and progress in the region through appropriate arrangements and with the participation of all the regional States, with adequate guarantees and with the involvement of the Security Council to be worked out.

To achieve those objectives, and as a result of extensive, high-level consultations, Yugoslavia, as Chairman of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, convened a consultative informal meeting of a group of foreign ministers of non-aligned countries a few days ago in Belgrade. Our intention was to exchange views on what the non-aligned countries and the Movement itself could do in the present situation to eliminate the cause of the conflict and to address the problem by political means. Following a very fruitful, substantive and concrete discussion, the ministers decided to continue to exert individual and joint efforts in the search for further initiatives towards peace, taking into account ideas and suggestions advanced in that meeting.

(Mr. Silovic, Yugoslavia)

On the basis of various proposals and approaches that were suggested, it was agreed that this action should continue, on the one hand towards Iraq and on the other towards the countries of the coalition. To this end, Yugoslavia has already undertaken consultations on the composition of two groups of Ministers of non-aligned countries which would approach and contact all the parties concerned. The future course of these activities will depend on the results of these contacts, primarily those in Baghdad.

The Security Council meets at a grave and dramatic moment and on the eve of the possibility of a new escalation of the war, when ground operations are expected to be launched in all their destructiveness. The prospects are frightening - enormous losses, suffering, ecological degradation and heavy and lasting material and moral damage.

This situation is an overwhelming challenge to the Security Council and the whole of the United Nations. We must continue our endeavours, along the lines of the established priorities, towards a just peace in the Gulf. We must not give up. We must not abandon the fate of millions of people from Iraq, Kuwait and other countries to the winds of war, and we must not abandon our attempts to stop the ongoing tragedy. The deplorable loss of life, the deaths of innocent civilians, mostly women and children, in the bombing of Baghdad two days ago, should be a sobering warning.

Yesterday's statement issued by the Yugoslav Foreign Ministry says:

"this tragic incident should remind all the parties in this conflict of their commitment, in the spirit of the Geneva Convention, to refrain from all activities that may cause civilian casualties.

"Yugoslavia again calls upon the international community and, in the first place, the parties directly involved to redouble their efforts with a view to finding a peaceful solution by eliminating the root causes of this conflict so as to bring the Gulf war to a speedy conclusion and to avoid its

(Mr. Silovic, Yugoslavia)

further escalation with unprecedented consequences both for the region and the world at large".

Let me stress once again: the end of the war and stable peace in the Gulf can be achieved only on the basis of the principles of international law and the United Nations Charter, and a political solution to the conflict can only be based on the relevant Security Council resolutions. Iraq should be urged again to comply with the will of the international community and thus make it possible to prevent a further tragic chain of events.

Yugoslavia on its own behalf, and as the current Chairman of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, stands ready to cooperate fully with the Security Council and the Secretary-General as the embodiment of our Organization in order to contribute to peace in the Gulf, which is vital to the people of that region and the whole of mankind.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the representative of Yugoslavia for his kind words addressed to me.

Mr. PICKERING (United States of America): I have been heartened by the overwhelming degree of agreement which our discussion over the past several days has revealed. But yesterday's statement by Iraq offered little hope. Its air of unreality and the clear lack of concern over the effect of Iraq's tragic policy on the country itself and on its neighbours can only fill us with unease, even as we confirm our resolve to ensure that international law and the will of the international community are respected.

The reports today from Baghdad are, unfortunately, not much more encouraging. It would seem that at least Iraq has conceded that it will have to withdraw from Kuwait, but it would appear that there is nothing else new here and that it still remains for Iraq to confirm that it will comply with the United Nations resolutions through immediate and concrete actions on the ground - a visible and massive departure from Kuwait.

(Mr. Pickering, United States)

Iraq has again put forward conditions which it knows are unacceptable, and has added a great number of new ones. There are at least a dozen conditions demanded in one form or another in return for purported Iraqi compliance with resolution 660 (1990). This establishment of linkages and conditions is directly contrary to the words of resolution 660 (1990), which Iraq purports to accept: unconditional withdrawal.

A full study of all these conditions is something that I will not attempt here and now. However, the demand that the Security Council abolish 11 of the 12 resolutions on Iraqi aggression against Kuwait in itself is sufficiently sweeping and outrageous as to deserve mention. Among these resolutions is one declaring the annexation of Kuwait null and void. We can only assume that Iraq wishes to maintain that annexation.

The demand to abolish all those resolutions is something the Council clearly would not accede to in any event, and doing so would require the Council to reward Saddam Hussein for his withdrawal, something we have declared is inconceivable.

Iraq apparently insists that its territorial claims, presumptively to Kuwaiti islands and oil, must also be guaranteed.

Another demand is for the withdrawal of foreign military forces and equipment from the region, including Israel. While absolutely no time-scale is proposed for the purported Iraqi withdrawal from Kuwait, Iraq was quick to fix a one-month time period in its demand for the withdrawal of others. Linkage with the Arab-Israeli issue has been unacceptable to my Government and to many other Governments. Iraq's demands for such linkage would again turn the purported withdrawal from Kuwait into another system of rewards for Iraq, the original aggressor.

Iraq states in effect that it will not agree to the return of the legitimate Government of Kuwait, a major factor in the resolutions which the Council has already passed and which the Council has insisted shall be fully implemented.

(Mr. Pickering, United States)

Iraq also claims financial support for the repair of damage which it has suffered as a result of its aggression and says that its debts should be cancelled and that it should have a determining voice in dealing with the wealth of the region. Iraq's own commitment to democracy and democratic values stands in stark contrast to its political demands. Iraq's profligate spending over the last decade on military equipment belies its interest in dealing with the plight of the poor in the region and elsewhere.

This obvious attempt to buy time will not help in bringing the conflict to an end. We have been over this ground before. A cease-fire without concrete implementation of complete withdrawal is also not acceptable. Iraq would use the opportunity to regroup and resupply its forces, thus prolonging the war and increasing the risk to coalition members and their forces. This we will not accept.

As President Bush said today:

"Until a massive withdrawal begins with Iraqi troops visibly leaving Kuwait, the coalition forces acting under resolution 678 will continue their efforts to force compliance with all the resolutions of the United Nations."

I look forward to hearing Iraq's response to the questions posed yesterday by the United Kingdom and Soviet representatives. The United States asks that all United Nations Member States here today join in renewing the call to Iraq to take these necessary steps to end the tragedy which it has caused. An anxious world awaits Iraq's choice for peace. A determined world will not tolerate Iraq's continued aggression and occupation of its small neighbour.

I should like now to say just a few words in reaction to the statement of the representative of Cuba. First let me say how pleased I am that the decision he made in another room not to participate here was not really a decision at all. We are all pleased to see his participation.

(Mr. Pickering, United States)

The three resolution texts he has presented will of course be studied by all of us. A first response is also in order at this point. It appears to us that two of the draft resolutions are clearly unnecessary and one unacceptable.

Let me be a little more specific about this. One draft resolution proposes a renewal of the Secretary-General's good offices and his role as a mediator, but clearly the Secretary-General needs no further encouragement. He continues to seek all opportunities, I am sure, in order to be of help. His statement of 15 January makes this clear. The role he plays as a result of his position under the Charter was clearly set out by the Council in paragraphs 12 and 13 of resolution 674 (1990). With the Council's permission, I shall quote them. We say that the Security Council:

> "12. Reposes its trust in the Secretary-General to make available his good offices and, as he considers appropriate, to pursue them and to undertake diplomatic efforts in order to reach a peaceful solution to the crisis caused by the Iraqi invasion and occupation of Kuwait on the basis of Security Council resolutions 660 (1990), 662 (1990) and 664 (1990), and calls upon all States, both those in the region and others, to pursue on this basis their efforts to this end, in conformity with the Charter, in order to improve the situation and restore peace, security and stability;
>
> "13. Requests the Secretary-General to report to the Security Council on the results of his good offices and diplomatic efforts."

We can do no better than that.

Another draft resolution sets up a committee of the whole on an ad hoc basis. I do not frankly know what such a committee might do that we cannot do right here and now in this Chamber with the full participation of all the Members of this Organization to provide their help and advice. A committee of the whole meeting elsewhere behind closed doors would reverse the process. It is strange that one of

(Mr. Pickering, United States)

the progenitors of an open formal meeting should now, within just a few days, turn to a closed-door restricted session. I leave to him an explanation of this reversal of position. In the meantime, why not continue working here to produce ideas and suggestions? Indeed, I would be pleased now or later to hear any new ideas which he and others may have to offer us.

The third draft resolution is more troubling. It proposes that the bombing of Iraqi cities - if I understand it correctly - should be immediately halted and negotiations begin. Aside from the fact that in Cuba's explanation it indicated a concern not only about Iraqis but Israeli, and possibly Saudis and even Americans, why should his call be limited to one area only?

But there is an even more troubling problem. The draft resolution is in effect a cease-fire with its call for a halt in all further use of force. A limitation on the use of force at this time, precisely when there is no clear indication that it would lead to a withdrawal, would not facilitate the achievement of the objective we all seek. It would be turning the whole process we have followed here in the Council up on its head. We have authorized the use of force to achieve a withdrawal. We have now begun to hear about a vague possibility, hedged around as it is with conditions. It is regrettably not now the time for the Council to set aside its carefully considered decisions and plans and reverse its present course of assuring a withdrawal. Iraq's proposals are not in keeping with resolution 660 (1990) and now is not the time to permit Saddam Hussein to regroup, repair and rebuild his military machine. Military targets in cities are at the centre of the effort to promote and sustain Iraqi aggression against Kuwait and should and must be part of the effort to secure the withdrawal we all seek - an effort which makes all possible efforts to avoid civilian casualties.

The PRESIDENT: The next speaker is the representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran. I invite him to take a place at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. KHARRAZI (Islamic Republic of Iran): At the outset, I should like to congratulate you, Sir, on your assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for the month of February 1991. I hope that with your diplomatic skills and leadership the Council can fulfil its mandate to maintain international peace and security. At the same time, I should like to thank your predecessor, the Permanent Representative of Zaire, who guided the difficult deliberations during the month of January.

The Security Council is convened today to discuss one of the most important issues since its inception in 1945 - an issue which deals directly with security and stability at the international level. The grave situation in the Persian Gulf area which resulted from the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait on 2 August 1990 is threatening not only the security of our region but also international peace and security. From the very beginning, the Islamic Republic of Iran called for an immediate and unconditional withdrawal of Iraqi troops from all of Kuwait. We have also opposed the presence of foreign forces in the region. The leadership of the Islamic Republic of Iran made several representations to Iraqi top officials to withdraw from Kuwait and thereby spare the people of Iraq and Kuwait and save the region from the flame of a disastrous war. Unfortunately, the international efforts, including the tireless efforts of the Secretary-General of the United Nations and our own efforts, did not bear fruit because of Iraq's continuing occupation of Kuwait, on the one hand, and objectives of foreign military presence which go far beyond the liberation of Kuwait, on the other. We are now faced with another war in this most volatile area whose repercussions will not be limited to the present generation.

(Mr. Kharrazi, Islamic Republic of Iran)

More than four weeks have elapsed since the outbreak of the hostilities. The Security Council, which is responsible for the maintenance of international peace and security, has not yet pronounced itself officially on the status of crisis and on the conduct of hostilities. The whole international community genuinely expected the Council, which was so very active in adopting resolutions concerning this crisis before 15 January 1991, not to be aloof on the diplomatic front. Unfortunately, some permanent members of the Council even attempted to prevent the Security Council from convening in informal consultations to discuss the situation at the early stages of the conflict. The circumstances under which this formal session is convened are quite regrettable and an affront to the democratic process.

(Mr. Kharrazi, Islamic Republic of Iran)

Now the world is witnessing the loss of thousands of innocent civilian lives in Iraq and Kuwait and the total destruction of economic resources in Iraq and Kuwait, as well as an ecological disaster. The recent bombing of a public shelter in Baghdad is only one example of casualties inflicted upon defenceless civilians. Where did the Security Council authorize the destruction of the infrastructure of Iraq and Kuwait or the killing of defenceless civilians, who have taken no part in the conflict? Should not the Security Council be prepared to address violations of the rules of international humanitarian law?

The Security Council of the United Nations is being misused again by certain permanent members, as it was misused during the eight years of Iraq's war against Iran and as it has been misused on the question of Palestine for the past 40 years. The misuse of the United Nations machinery as a catalyst for implementation of the foreign policy of certain permanent members of the Security Council is beginning to form an integral part of what is called the "new world order" - a new world order that is being conceived in undeterred use of massive force, a new world order whose final determinant is supremacy of military force.

Speaking quite frankly, we are concerned about the future of our region. We are concerned about the far-reaching objectives of the United States and its allies in the region. There is a great deal of suspicion about the objectives they are pursuing in this war - objectives that go beyond the provisions of the relevant Security Council resolutions. The United States and its allies have yet to convince the people in our region, in terms both of assurances and of deeds, that domination and control of the political, economic and social life of our region is not among the objectives they are pursuing. The Security Council also has a clear responsibility in this regard. It has to give guarantees and assurances that all

(Mr. Kharrazi, Islamic Republic of Iran)

foreign forces will immediately leave the area following the termination of the hostilities.

The Islamic Republic of Iran has fully respected the resolutions adopted by the Security Council with regard to the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait. We have adopted an active position of non-engagement in the hostilities. However, we are certainly not indifferent to the future of the region or the conduct of the hostilities. We cannot and will not turn a blind eye to the suffering of the civilian population under bombardment and under economic sanctions.

The people of Iraq and Kuwait have suffered almost seven months of economic sanctions. The medicine and foodstuff situation has deteriorated particularly during the past month. For that reason, my country has officially informed the Security Council of this very important humanitarian issue and asked the Sanctions Committee to act promptly on our request to send foodstuffs to Iraq and Kuwait. Unfortunately, our request has not yet been responded to positively. The authorities of the Red Crescent Society of the Islamic Republic of Iran are still waiting for the Sanction Committee's approval to send foodstuffs to Iraq, with the cooperation of the International Committee of the Red Cross. However, several consignments of medicine have already been sent to Iraq by the Iranian Red Crescent Society and the International Committee of the Red Cross.

After hostilities began on 17 January 1991, some countries, including my own, tried to find a peaceful end to this tragic conflict, and they are continuing to do so. Aware of the dangers of the present conflict - namely, its widening and prolongation and the violations of the laws and norms governing the conduct of hostilities - the Islamic Republic of Iran is convinced that, bearing in mind the relevant resolutions of the Security Council, all efforts should be directed towards terminating this conflict as soon as possible through peaceful means.

(Mr. Kharrazi, Islamic Republic of Iran)

The Islamic Republic of Iran is convinced that for the achievement of durable peace and lasting security for the area, an endless bloody war is not an option: the real option is the acceleration of efforts to attain a political settlement. Any workable political settlement has to be built upon three major criteria: first, immediate, unconditional and complete withdrawal of Iraqi forces from Kuwait; secondly, rapid withdrawal of all foreign forces from the area; thirdly, a forward-looking scheme of security arrangements to provide for the collective security of the littoral States of the Persian Gulf, with the cooperation of the Secretary-General of the United Nations and without interference by major Powers.

Those criteria have been our guiding principles. Recently, Hujjat-ul-Islam Hashemi Rafsanjani, the President of the Islamic Republic of Iran, sent an oral message to the President of Iraq and presented "some ideas" for peace. A written response has been received from Baghdad which, in our view, leaves the door open for further diplomatic efforts. President Hashemi Rafsanjani intends to dispatch a high-level delegation to Baghdad in a few days to carry a written and detailed response to President Saddam Hussein. The Islamic Republic of Iran considers, the announcement by Iraq's Revolutionary Command Council concerning withdrawal from Kuwait as a positive move towards the achievement of a political settlement. This move provides the basis for the Security Council to double its diplomatic efforts to convince Iraq to comply with the relevant Security Council resolutions. My country will leave no stone unturned to that end. We are determined to continue our efforts to avert further destruction and a catastrophe.

In addition to its individual efforts, the Islamic Republic of Iran will continue to take an active part in the collective efforts of some non-aligned countries to find such a political solution.

(Mr. Kharrazi, Islamic Republic of Iran)

For some years now the Islamic Republic of Iran has been calling for the establishment of regional security arrangements among the countries in the Persian Gulf. Our position in this regard is clear. Security and tranquillity in our region should be ensured by the countries of the region through their own initiative. We are of the opinion that after the termination of this unfortunate war the littoral States of the Persian Gulf should discuss the ways and means for achieving a security arrangement in this vital region, free from foreign intervention. Any attempt by foreign countries present in our region to consolidate that presence cannot be tolerated by the people of the region. Unfortunately, the way in which the allied forces are conducting the war and their positions regarding the future of the region have given rise to more instability in the Persian Gulf area. We have made it clear time and again that the presence of foreign forces in the region is inherently destabilizing and therefore they must leave the area as soon as the crisis is over. We believe that only the countries of the region, which enjoy a common religion and culture, can, and indeed must, find a proper mechanism for safeguarding peace and security in the Persian Gulf area.

The Security Council has a big responsibility at this crucial juncture. The world is watching these deliberations in the Security Council. It is incumbent upon the Council to monitor the situation closely and to take positions of principle on the prevention of violations of international humanitarian law and of both the prolongation and the widening of the conflict, so as not to undermine the credibility of the United Nations as a whole.

Mr. ALARCON DE QUESADA (Cuba) (interpretation from Spanish): Frankly, I was surprised to hear the recent comments of the representative of the United States. I had not intended to speak again this afternoon, but out of courtesy to the overwhelming majority of my colleagues in this Chamber who did not have an opportunity to attend what are known as informal consultations, I must speak.

I do not know where Ambassador Pickering got the idea I had ever said I would not speak at this meeting. What we have been talking about a great deal - sometimes in the area between this Chamber and the room next door - is this. All Members of the Organization, including those not members of the Council, should be allowed to speak under whatever conditions they wish, so that the representatives of the press and the general public may hear them. I certainly did not say I would never speak at this meeting of the Council.

As a matter of fact, the reality is quite the opposite of what he has suggested. Everybody knows the Council was prevented from fulfilling its most elementary obligation: to meet. It took a tremendous effort just to get us into this Chamber to do what we have been doing this last few days. That was not exactly because of Cuban opposition. It is a secret to no one that the primary obstacle to this meeting was the position represented by Ambassador Pickering. The Council has become this kind of private meeting - and not because my delegation proposed such a thing, but because of the United States interest in that happening.

He sees a contradiction between our position in favour of an open meeting and our suggestion that a committee of the Security Council be created. We did not suggest that discussion of the war should take place in a small body marked by agoraphobia and night-time meetings, which are perhaps preferred by certain major Powers. We want normal meetings. The Council has had one related to the situation in the Gulf.

But he omitted a very important detail: that it would be the role of that

(Mr. Alarcon de Quesada, Cuba)

committee to report to the Council, preferably in public. Preferably it would not have to be a private meeting. Of course, if Ambassador Pickering prefers to have ideas on peace or negotiations discussed in public, there will be no objection from me.

What my delegation is opposed to, and tenaciously, is depriving people of the right to follow the proceedings of the Security Council. My delegation has never been opposed to there being normal negotiating procedures, normal discussions. We know that often peace is not negotiated in public. But that does not contradict the right of individuals to be informed of what is happening in the Security Council.

I regret he was opposed, on the one hand, to the opening of the debate and, on the other, to negotiations moving ahead in that debate. What bothered him the most was that one delegation - not that of the United States - presented a draft resolution and there was an erroneous reference to a cease-fire. That is not what my delegation proposed. I even tried to spell that out in my statement.

We know who decides on shooting. We know who gave the order to shoot. We know who gave the order to approach certain targets. We know who says when one can go from one stage to another in the war. We know who establishes the war's objectives.

Ambassador Pickering did not address that, but on television today everybody saw how the United States interpreted resolution 678 (1990). I do not know in what paragraph of the 12 Security Council resolutions we authorized the commander-in-chief of the forces against Iraq to change that country's Government. Yet that was referred to by the President of the United States.

Ambassador Pickering, who likes to put questions to Ambassadors, might himself be tempted to answer this question: what paragraph did President Bush use in suggesting that there might be coup d'etat in Iraq, that that was one of the alleged objectives of the international community?

(Mr. Alarcon de Quesada, Cuba)

My delegation asked the Security Council to do three rather simple things, the first of which was to ask the Secretary-General to continue his good offices. That was one of the most singular aspects of the action taken by the Security Council in connection with the conflict from the very beginning. If that is considered unnecessary, because it has already been covered by a given paragraph in a given resolution, then I would ask what would be the problem - now that there are new developments in the conflict, now that we are welcoming gestures made by a certain Government to resolve the conflict - in the Security Council's asking the Secretary-General to make efforts along these lines? We know he has every right to make such efforts. But the fact is that there is no desire to give support to the Secretary-General along these lines. Let say this openly, quite bluntly.

I would be prepared to say this. We regret television is absent, but from 12 August until the present date there has, among other things, been a concerted effort to keep away from this process any negotiating effort, any alternative along the lines I have just mentioned: that the Security Council may set up a committee to consider alternative formulas to prevent an armed conflict and to bring about peace. Well, that is legitimate. Groups of States can take such actions. But does not the Security Council have responsibilities in respect of international peace and security? What is so strange about the Security Council doing what certain States in the Security Council feel should be done, and what other members of the international community feel should be done.

In connection with this major concern, a cease-fire, I did not ask for that. I am well aware that more than coming to the Security Council would be needed for that: we would have to go to the White House. But I would just say this: let the bombs not fall on civilians. I think that is the position the United States says it has taken. Why should there be any alarm in this connection?

(Mr. Alarcon de Quesada, Cuba)

My delegation tried to present its three draft resolutions in the least polemical tone possible and expressed a willingness to discuss any idea that any other member of the Security Council might wish to put forward.

I want to make it clear that when I expressed concern over the plight of civilian populations, I said - and I repeat - that I was referring to those of Iraq, Kuwait, Israel and Saudi Arabia. In fact, I was referring to any other community of innocent human beings who might be affected by this conflict.

If, in our draft resolution, we focus on one aspect of the matter - the problems of civilians in Iraq - it is for a very simple reason: I believe that no matter what rhetorical efforts might be made in private or in public - in a clandestine or open meeting - no one can be unaware of the fact that for a month now an absolutely unprecedented quantity of explosives, bombs and rockets, the fruit of modern technology and human destructive ingenuity, have fallen on the population of a small third-world country. According to some estimates, the fire-power concentrated on Iraq has exceeded the bombardment of Hiroshima or Nagasaki; other estimates put it in excess of all the destructive force of the Second World War.

As to concern over human lives, I added that the Council and the whole world must do their utmost to put a speedy end to this war, in the interests not only of the civilians of the countries affected, but of the soldiers on both sides - above all, the American soldiers, who represent the majority of the coalition forces. I am concerned for them and I believe that we are all morally obligated to be concerned about the lives of these young Americans, who might also be killed in the fighting.

Frankly, I find it difficult to understand how we, a group of diplomats far removed from where the bombs are falling and the guns are firing could be upset by so bold an attempt as to save lives on both sides. Should not the Security Council

(Mr. Alarcon de Quesada, Cuba)

have been doing whatever it could to pursue the clear objective we have had since the adoption of resolution 660 (1990): restoration of Kuwait's independence, sovereignty, territorial integrity and legitimate authorities without death and destruction?

If I have failed to show sufficient respect for those who are the masters of this great fire-power, it is simply because I cannot agree that they should also be the masters of the Security Council.

Mr. PICKERING (United States of America): I hope the representative of Cuba will carefully read the record of what he has just said. It is still a puzzle to me and I remain impressed by the schizophrenia of that particular statement. Is he for an open meeting or a private meeting? I just do not know, but I think this one is pretty good. We are having a good debate; it is a good exchange. There are 250 people out here who I believe testify to the fact that this is a pretty open forum.

Secondly, President Bush's statement speaks clearly for itself. It needs no explanation.

Thirdly, where was the representative of Cuba and where was all the concern about the killing and the destruction when Kuwait was being raped, tortured and murdered? I have not heard it. I do not know where it was.

Fourthly, read your resolution. It requests that the negotiations for seeking a peaceful resolution of the conflict be immediately intensified without further resort to force. "Without further resort to force" appears to me to mean a cease-fire. Maybe the representative of Cuba has a different explanation.

Sir David HANNAY (United Kingdom): I am prompted to intervene by my wonderment, frankly, at the second presentation by the representative of Cuba, who seems to be otherwise occupied at the moment but whom I will give the opportunity to turn his attention to what I am about to say.

(Sir David Hannay, United Kingdom)

The presentation that he gave bore very little resemblance to reality. He spoke at great length and with great eloquence about the good offices of the Secretary-General. There is only one thing that is stopping the Secretary-General from using his good offices, and that is the flow of insult and calumny coming from Baghdad. How on earth can he use his good offices when he is subjected to letter after letter accusing him quite wrongly of a whole number of nameless crimes? Would not the representative of Cuba perhaps find it more useful if the Cuban embassy in Baghdad could remonstrate with the Government of that country and ask it to stop insulting the Secretary-General? The good offices of the Secretary-General are set out very clearly in the Charter and they are encouraged to be used in Security Council resolution 674 (1990). I have no doubt whatsoever that if there were any opening for the use of those good offices, the Secretary-General would seize it with both hands. But it is rather difficult to advance into a storm of calumny. I think it would be a good thing to get that toned down.

I have completely lost the representative of Cuba on his objective with his committee. By the time he had described that committee to us in great detail, I began at last to recognize the activities that we perform in the consultation room, which he hates going into so much. He perfectly described the nature of the Security Council's meetings in informal consultations of the whole, which he is always telling us are incapable of taking decisions and the wrong place to be discussing matters. So why do not we go in there, if he wishes to, and talk about some of these ideas for finding peace? Why do we have to set up a committee to do so? It seems to me bizarre. Frankly, if the world believes that we are going to bring peace by setting up a committee, they will not give it much credibility.

Concerning the third draft resolution of which the representative of Cuba spoke, like the representative of the United States I would recommend that he look carefully at the text. It appears to give rise to some misunderstanding. It may

(Sir David Hannay, United Kingdom)

be that this is partly due to translation faults. I do not know. But it certainly does refer to and go further than the simple bombing, and it is certainly narrower than his own description of the need to cease bombing, because it makes no reference to any bombing except in Iraq.

I believe that it would be a good thing to have a useful discussion at some stage of these draft resolutions, but we shall all need time to study them. I am at your disposition, Mr. President, for having a serious discussion of them. But a serious discussion will not be promoted by the sort of discussion we are having now.

Mr. ALARCON DE QUESADA (Cuba) (interpretation from Spanish): I did not provoke this discussion. The difference between so-called unofficial meetings of the Council and of a committee is that they are so informal that there is no record of agreements or of what is discussed. That makes it possible for some members to distort the proceedings and attribute to others statements that they never made.

As far as where I was when the Security Council studied, discussed and adopted a resolution on the tragic plight of the people of Kuwait, I was here, more or less in the same seat, and I voted in favour of it.

I believe that resolution 677 (1990) was adopted unanimously by the Council last November. It was neither an informal meeting nor a small committee. It was in this room, with spectators. As will be recalled, everyone was present and everyone voted in favour of that resolution.

The PRESIDENT: There are a number of speakers remaining. With the concurrence of members of the Council, I shall suspend the meeting now until 11 o'clock tomorrow morning.

The meeting was suspended at 7.50 p.m.